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8 State and sovereignty

Navnita Chadha Behera

Introduction

Sylvia Mirabal was eight years old when the Taos Pueblo community celebrated the return of the Blue Lake and its surrounding 48,000 acres of land from the U.S. Congress. She had learned about the legend of the Blue Lake – the place of their origin and source of all life force. From the 16th century, Spanish and Mexicans had recognized their land rights, reaffirming their sovereignty under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 with the U.S. government. In 1906, U.S. President Roosevelt took over their lands, incorporating these into the Carson National Forest. After 64 years of long struggle, the Taos Pueblo people got back the “trust title” for these lands and became a “sovereign nation” within the U.S. (Deverell 1987). At the 40th anniversary of this milestone event in September 2010, Mirabal was happy to celebrate her grandfathers’ role in this struggle which earned them continued “free access” to the Blue Lake.¹ The apparent contradiction of being part of a “sovereign nation,” which in turn was part of the territorially sovereign state of the U.S.A., made little difference.

Julie Roberts Szczepankiewicz, a young Polish girl, had often heard her mother saying “grandmother was Polish *but* they lived somewhere close to the Russian border.” Much later, she understood that was because Poland did not exist as an independent nation between 1795 and 1918. Her ancestral village, Kowalewo-Opactwo in present-day Słupca County of Wielkopolskie province, was originally part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which was partitioned thrice among Russia, Prussia and Austrian empires during this period. However, when she inquired if these border changes implied that her ancestors were not Poles, but were really German or Russian, she soon learned that ethnicity and nationality were not necessarily the same thing, best explained by her Polish grandma who told her, “if a cat has kittens in a china cabinet, you don’t call them teacups.”²

Sovereign states are the fundamental building blocks of the international system, and are at the core of most theories of International Relations (IR). The dominant narratives casting them as permanent, primordial and somewhat unproblematic entities are, however, at deep variance with the ways in which statehood has evolved and political authority and statecraft are understood and practiced in different parts of the world. These stories illustrate that statehood and sovereignty are experienced by their respective inhabitants differently across historical spans and geographical loci, and yet IR’s disciplinary debates fail to account for such diverse realities across the globe.

This chapter therefore argues that the sovereign state needs to be viewed as a historically evolving and living entity that is constantly-in-making, whose internal and

external structures, constituent social forces, political choices and cultural renderings continually shape its political character. Reworking its conceptualization entails *not* using Westphalia as a ubiquitous point of reference and according due recognition to different imaginaries of political authority, statecraft and statehood. We will debate the meaning and import of the concepts of state and sovereignty from three vantage points: their theoretical notions; the underlying methodological assumptions; and the empirical realities. The rest of the chapter is broadly divided into three parts. The first part captures the key components of the existing literature, especially from a theoretical and methodological standpoint. The second part explains why such characterizations tend to give a misleading and erroneous account of these concepts owing not only to their Eurocentrism, rendering them to be ahistorical, but also because these are “unscientific” and their claims of “universality” and “objectivity” do not stand up to scrutiny. The third part discusses what needs to be done in order to arrive at a more holistic understanding of these concepts.

What’s (out) there? Singular underpinnings

The state system is a distinctive form of political community, which in the contemporary international system is the primary unit that has the legitimacy, authority and recognition for organizing international life.

The classic Weberian notion of the state refers to a territorial entity with fixed and legitimate borders and a largely homogeneous populace. In addition, its institutional apparatus enjoys a monopoly over legitimate instruments of using force and commands the unquestioned loyalty of its citizens. Weber underlined four features: community, legitimacy, violence and territory as the constitutive elements of the modern state (1994: 310–311).

A modern state is sovereign because it is able to exercise absolute and legitimate authority within its territorial boundaries without being challenged by any other political community within or outside its jurisdiction. The classic notion of sovereignty denotes the power to command and rule, which is rendered legitimate through a claim to authority. Its internal dimension implies consolidation of the territory under a single authority and the recognition of that authority as legitimate by the population, and its external dimension denoted such recognition by other states.

State and sovereignty are thus understood as mutually constitutive concepts. States define the meaning of sovereignty through their engagement in practices of mutual recognition, while mutual recognition of claims of sovereignty is, in turn, an important element in the definition of the state itself (Biersteker 2002: 157). Similarly, Hinsley notes “the origin and history of the concept of sovereignty are closely linked with the nature, the origin and the history of the state” (Hinsley 1986: 2). Territoriality lies at the heart of both concepts as a state cannot exist without territory and sovereignty can be exercised only within the fixed territorial borders of a state. The Westphalian ideal of sovereignty in particular stresses “the principle of the inviolability of these borders” (Hinsley 1986: 2).

The existing debates on the concepts of state and sovereignty may be divided into two broad approaches – positivist and post-positivist – wherein each shares philosophical bases, theoretical principles and methodological orientations. Positivist philosophy stipulates that all authoritative knowledge can only be derived through scientific methods based on empirical evidence (Smith et al. 1996). So, all social phenomena that exist are

knowable by human reason/rationality and can be verified through observation, experimentation and mathematical/logical proof. It rejects value judgments and its belief in objective reality leads scholars to make epistemological claims that yield *definitive* and *singular* answers to “what” counts as knowledge of any social phenomenon and “how” to determine the validity and legitimacy of such knowledge. In International Relations, realists and liberals of all persuasions abide by a positivist characterization of the sovereign state, which is viewed as a natural and permanent phenomenon and hence, an unproblematic entity. An epistemological formulation of state and sovereignty bestows them with the qualities of being “timeless” and universal phenomena.

Deploying positivist tools, realists insist that fundamental features of state and sovereignty are “given” and self-perpetuating, effectively ruling out any possibility of transformation in terms of their defining features and inner workings. They view the state as a unitary and primary actor in the international system and argue that domestic and international politics follow different logics. Hence, scholars need to firmly focus on the state’s behavior in the external domain while the workings of its inner domain do not matter or simply do not fall within the purview of IR’s subject matter. All states, it is argued, are functionally alike in their inner domain, perform broadly similar functions and have a benign presence in so far as they usually provide basic social values such as security, freedom, order, justice and welfare (Jackson and Sorenson 2007: 5). That is because every human being derives his/her security by virtue of being a citizen of a state, and while a citizen’s life inside a state is free, secure and orderly, statelessness is a source of fear and insecurity. In the external realm, classical realist Hans Morgenthau believed that states always pursue their interests defined in terms of power, while Kenneth Waltz, a neo-realist, argued that there are constraints on a state’s behavior imposed by the structure of the international system. Since all sovereign states are equal, the international system becomes anarchical in the absence of any overarching authority and hence IR is mainly concerned with power struggles among states. The liberal argument is different only to the extent that anarchy in the international system can be mitigated with the help of international institutions and regimes and that a state’s power and authority tend to be circumscribed on account of the market forces at work, both inside and outside its borders.

Neither realists nor liberals account for different historical trajectories of state-making because their conceptual parameters are almost exclusively drawn on the basis of a particular slice of Western Europe’s history, that is the Peace of Westphalia treaties signed in 1648. In fact, the modern state in the IR literature is often referred to as the “Westphalian state,” though, significantly, how this model became “global” is the most neglected and perhaps least understood part of the story.

Post-positivism, by contrast, is an approach drawn on by a range of theoretical schools of thought in IR including critical theory, constructivism, Marxism, feminism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism and historical sociology. This approach rejects the foundational proposition of positivism that reality exists independently “out there” and argues that it is mediated by historicity as much as the values norms and social practices of the actors involved. It accords primacy to the ontological questions of “what is there” in terms of the nature of reality, which varies and is subject to change being a socially constructed phenomenon. Knowledge, it is argued, is created, not discovered; and knowledge is power, that is, it is produced in the form of opinions and theories by those in power whose interests it serves. Accordingly, the post-positivist approach believes in historicizing and offers a sociological understanding of the sovereign state.

Its engagement with the ontological question of what constitutes reality paves the way for recognizing that the state is neither a natural nor a permanent phenomenon but rather a historically and socially constructed phenomenon. In fact, for the better part of human history, humans have organized themselves politically in a diversity of ways, ranging from city-states, kingdoms, feudatories and colonies to empires. Accordingly, there are scholars who do not accept the state as a given, and focus on explaining how the state was made, how its boundaries were formed and maintained and how it came to appear as natural and “given.” In doing so, however, scholars have pursued different lines of inquiry and reached differing conclusions.

Charles Tilly’s work on the formation of European states, for instance, focused on how they acquired the monopoly over coercive instruments of power, characterizing the state-making process as a “quintessential protection racket with the advantage of legitimacy,” and terming these as the “largest examples of organized crime” in history (1985: 170). Benno Teschke deploys Marxist and historical sociological approaches to show that the modern sovereign state was born only after capitalism took root in 17th-century England, thereby drawing a clear distinction between the “absolutist sovereignty” of France (which, unlike England was present at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648) and the “capitalist sovereignty” of England (2004: 59–60). Teschke argues that this became possible only because the capitalist social formations had paved the way for the formal separation of politics and the economy, thus rendering sovereignty to become a purely political affair. Feminist scholars trace the birth of the public–private dichotomy to the early experiences of state-making of the Athenian *polis* in Greece, wherein “the propertied men acquired status, authority and resources as patriarchal heads-of-households and the new participants in the public sphere,” driving women into the now-subordinated private sphere, and viewing them exclusively as biological and social reproducers (Peterson 1996: 263).

These theoretical approaches also reject the cartographic view of the state as a legal-territorial entity and question the inside–outside binary by arguing that the sovereign state must be contextualized in the social domain within which it is located. Recognizing that a society may not be homogeneous, comprising as it does different social classes and interest groups, the state–society relationship is viewed as a variable phenomenon. Society, from this standpoint, is not simply an arena where the state acts but a constitutive realm which shapes the very character of the state and informs its interests as well as its political choices.

Within the parameters of the sociological framework, however, scholars offer different perspectives. Feminists argue that the state is the chief organizer of patriarchy and manipulates gender identities to serve its narrow ends of maintaining internal unity and safeguarding its external legitimacy. They debunk the inside–outside binary which obscures the prior gendered public–private division within the states as explained above. Neo-Marxists focus on the social property relations, which they argue is the key to understanding both the character of the individual states as well as the dynamics of the inter-state system because the modern state and the capitalist mode of production have developed together (Halliday 1994; Rosenberg 1994; Teschke 2004). Modern capitalist states, for instance, are still involved in the regulation of the production process but they do not directly extract the surpluses. Earlier states were directly involved in the production process but with the separation of sovereign territorial governance and production, capitalist enterprises are now able to function internationally with much greater autonomy from state control. Linklater (1996: 127) explains how “the political architecture of global capitalism helps maintain material inequalities through a combination of coercion and efforts to win consent.”

They also pay much closer attention to the political rather than territorial aspects of sovereignty. While the critical theorists and feminists highlight the exclusionary dimensions of sovereignty in so far as they privilege citizens over human beings and the masculine over the feminine respectively, constructivists focus on the ideational structures and shared understandings that underpin the concept of sovereignty.

Finally, critical theorists offer an ethical critique of state and sovereignty and challenge the somewhat benign image of the state. The feminists lay bare its implicit hierarchical power structures that render the state as a site of oppression against women. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels had argued that the state cannot play an autonomous role, independent of the interests of the ruling bourgeoisie, and it was a mere instrument in their hands to exploit the proletariat. Among the later generation of neo-Marxists, however, Nicos Poulantzas (1975) and Peter Evans (1979) argued that the state could theoretically work against the ruling class, if it served against the broader purpose of preserving capitalism as a system. The post-modernist and critical theorists have also explained how the sovereign state can become a source of insecurity, injustice and violent conflicts and problematize its monopolizing claims of loyalties and allegiances of its citizens while exploring ways for transforming the state and rethinking the idea of a political community by instituting alternate cosmopolitan arrangements that would promote freedom, justice and equality among all.

The competing characterizations of a sovereign state as propounded by such different theoretical approaches are encapsulated in Table 8.1.

The “e” problem: Eurocentrism, epistemological frame and empiricism

Existing conceptions of state and sovereignty are neither scientific, capturing the objective truth, nor truly historical as they share a common “e” problem of Eurocentrism, that is, keeping Europe as their foundational basis for all theorizing (Alatas 2006; Amin 2009; Blaut 1992; Hobson 2012); privileging epistemological formulations at the cost of marginalizing or negating the ontologically divergent ground realities; and making empiricist claims that do not stand historical scrutiny.

History shows that the modern sovereign state has never “universally” acquired the “timeless” attributes that supposedly form its core constitutive elements. Scholars tracing the birth of the modern state system to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 also concede that it took several centuries for the modern state to evolve and acquire its contemporary character. Three historical junctures marking critical milestones in its evolution may be highlighted. First was the Peace of Westphalia treaties in 1648, which established the idea of the “free exercise of territorial right” (Treaty of Munster Article 64, Treaty of Osnabrück, Article VIII, 1) or the “territorial right and superiority” (Osnabrück, Article V, 30) that the princes have, thus linking political rule, or sovereignty, to land, to territory (Elden 2009: 201). Second, the birth of the United Nations in 1945 whose Charter enshrined the principle of sovereignty as a qualifying criterion for recognizing new states and the principle of sovereign equality (non-intervention in each other’s internal affairs) as the cornerstone of the post-World War II international system. The third milestone refers to the period from the mid-1950s through the 1970s when decolonization resulted in a sharp increase in the total number of sovereign states from 76 to 144 within a span of about 20 years (see Table 8.2).

None of the core constituent features of a sovereign state can consistently be identified throughout this long history of state-making in Africa or Asia as much as in Europe or

Table 8.1 Conceptualizations of state and sovereignty in IR

<i>Theoretical lens</i>	<i>Philosophical bases/methodologies</i>	<i>Basic conception of state</i>	<i>Basic conception of sovereignty</i>	<i>Key features of state and sovereignty</i>
Realism	Positivist and empiricist epistemology; ontology is irrelevant as Europe provides the historical basis for all theorizing	A unitary and primary actor in the international system	Territorial; sovereignty is absolute, indivisible and inalienable	a) Both are natural and permanent phenomena across time and space; b) The anarchical external domain causes the perennial security dilemma of states; c) The inner domain is secure, peaceful and orderly and fundamentally alike; states perform similar functions
Liberalism	Positivist and empiricist epistemology	A rational and central actor, embedded in international markets	Territorial, albeit powers of a sovereign state are malleable on account of transnational market forces	a) The state is a central player but non-state actors and international institutions also matter; b) The external domain is anarchical though it can be managed through international institutions; c) Markets and international institutions affect state policies and the welfare of its citizens
Critical Theory	Post-positivist; interpretative understanding upholds universal ethical norms; ontology, in principle, a must for theorizing	A distinct form of political community with particular functions, roles and responsibilities that are socially and historically determined	Political; focuses on practices of inclusion and exclusion of sovereign states that privilege its citizens over human beings	a) The state is neither natural, nor permanent; it examines how its boundaries are formed, maintained and transformed; b) An exclusionary form of political body whose “moral deficits” generate estrangement, injustice, insecurity and violent conflicts by imposing rigid boundaries between citizens of one state and other states; c) It seeks reconfiguration of political community by decentering the state with a cosmopolitan set of arrangements that will promote freedom, justice and equality across the globe
Post-modernism	Post-positivist; genealogical approach that rules out the possibility of any universal frame for theorizing; allows only for competing perspectives	The state is performatively constituted – an ontological product of continued iteration of a set of norms, not a singular act, beyond which it has no identity	Political; seeks to problematize and defy the territorial imperative of sovereignty and questions the spatial logic through which such boundaries have been constituted	a) The sovereign state is not a given; it is a subject in process that is always in the process of being constituted; b) The key is to understand how the sovereign state is made possible, naturalized and made to appear as if it had an essence (historical constitution and reconstitution of state as the primary/normal mode of subjectivity in international politics); c) It offers an ethical critique of state sovereignty and challenges its monopolizing claims over identifications, allegiances and loyalties of its members; d) It seeks to rethink the concept of the political without invoking assumptions of sovereignty and territoriality

(Continued)

Table 8.1 (Cont.)

<i>Theoretical lens</i>	<i>Philosophical bases/ methodologies</i>	<i>Basic conception of state</i>	<i>Basic conception of sovereignty</i>	<i>Key features of state and sovereignty</i>
Constructivism	Seeks to combine positivist epistemology with interpretative methods, historical analysis, and, intersubjective, social ontology	A socially constructed, distinct identity which is constituted by the institutionalized norms, values and ideas of the social environment in which it is embedded; it is not static but ever evolving because it interacts with its environment	A social and constitutive category since the prior condition of recognizing the sovereignty of individual states attests to a shared understanding and acceptance of the concept	a) Ideational and normative structures are as important as material structures for understanding state and sovereignty; b) The identity of a state informs its interests, and in turn, its actions; c) Agents and structures are mutually constitutive; the state and the international system both impact each other; d) Society is a constitutive realm, and the site that generates actors as knowledgeable social and political agents is the realm that makes them who they are
Feminism	Post-positivist; accords primacy to the social and historical context but primarily focuses on the gendered character of state and sovereignty irrespective of their Western or non-Western loci	Patriarchal and regarded as the centralized, main organizer of gendered power that works through the manipulation of public–private spheres; empirically, the state is (mostly) run by men, defended by men and advances the interests of men	Embodies the masculine dominance institutionalized through the parallel trajectories of sovereign contract and sexual contract, embedded in the public–private spheres	a) The state as a paramount expression of collective and historically constituted male power should not be taken as a given but explained in dynamic gender terms; b) It manipulates gender identities for its own internal unity and external legitimacy; c) The discursive separation of domestic and international politics obscures the prior gendered public–private division within states, and anarchy outside typically supports gender hierarchy at home and vice-versa; d) It disregards division between the individual, state and international system by showing how each level is preconditioned by the image of a rational man that excludes women and femininity
Neo-Marxism	Non-positivist; ontology matters as it takes social and historical context into account in challenging the thesis of the Westphalian origins of the modern state system but Europe remains the theoretical base	The socio-economic system (the mode of production) underpins the basic political character of the state	Reflects the nature of the state in capitalism where it has become purely political	a) The prevailing form of capitalism determines the basic character of state and sovereignty though they are both a historical product; b) The impersonal model of sovereignty is premised on the separation between the economic and the political domains – only possible in capitalism; c) Production shapes the nature of state power and strategic interactions between them and, in turn, it is shaped by them; d) Geo-political systems are structurally tied to different modes of production; e) The relationship between the state system and global capitalism (internationalization of relations of production) is needed to understand the structure of global hegemony and how it perpetuates inequalities of power and wealth

Table 8.2 Growth in the number of states in the international system

Number of member states of the United Nations

1945	51
1950	60
1955	76
1960	99
1965	117
1970	127
1975	144
1980	154
1985	159
1990	159
1995	185
2000	189
2005	192
2015	193

Source: www.un.org/en/members/growth.shtml

the Americas. Let us explain this by testing the claims to objectivity with reference to three such core constitutive features.

The *first* defining principle of the sovereign state – territoriality – stipulates that each state has fixed and legitimate borders within which it exercises its sovereignty. A material record of history at these critical milestones alongside the current global map clearly illustrates the constantly changing territorial configurations in every part of the world.³ Perhaps there is not a single state in the globe whose territorial borders have remained unchanged through this period.

Even the boundaries of European states – the bedrock for theorizing the sovereign state – have been substantially redrawn over centuries since 1648. Indeed, this transpired at the end of World War I in 1919; during World War II from 1939 until 1945 and in its immediate aftermath; and then at the end of the Cold War in 1990.⁴ The single most important transformation in the world's territorial map, however, took place when decolonization resulted in the creation of 68 states from the 1950s to the 1970s. This was also why the “territorial contiguity” principle characterizing a modern state's borders was not a universal practice until the mid-20th century as the imperial European powers, including the British, French, Italians, Spanish and Portuguese, had colonized large parts of the world, thereby exercising sovereignty over territories that were thousands of miles apart from the boundaries of their respective “parent” states. The number of sovereign states has continued to grow, almost quadrupling over the past 70 years. While there were 51 founding members of the United Nations in 1945, the organization's current membership stands at 193 member states.⁵ The growing number of sovereign states and changing territorial boundaries clearly show that the first constitutive feature of each state having fixed territorial boundaries even in the post-1945 period is but a myth.

The *second* principle refers to two linked features of a sovereign state: exercising monopoly over legitimate instruments of violence within its territory and being a provider of security to its citizens. The realist and liberal writings, however, offer no understanding about how such a monopoly was acquired by the European states

Table 8.3 Numbers of wars between 1820 and 2007

<i>Decade</i>	<i>International wars</i>	<i>Civil wars</i>	<i>Non-state wars</i>	<i>Total wars</i>
1820–1829	13	08	10	31
1860–1869	19	23	06	48
1890–1899	25	16	01	42
1900–1909	21	09	00	30
1930–1939	13	08	00	21
1960–1969	09	24	01	34
1990–1999	09	40	01	51
2000–2007	05	20	00	25

Source: www.correlatesofwar.org/COW2%20Data/WarData_NEW/WarList_NEW.html as cited in Sarkees and Wayman (2010)

over the millennia, which had entailed “imposition of the state’s religion on its population,” extensive monitoring of people’s lives for regular taxation and “disarming of all competing players including privateers and merchant shipping companies to pirates and mercenaries who were stripped of their powers to bear arms against or in competition with the state” (Devetak et al. 2012: 143). It was thus an end product of a long and bloody struggle by state builders to extract coercive capabilities from other individuals, groups and organizations within their territories (Tilly 1975: 71). While European states took four to seven centuries to emerge as fully fledged nation-states, the newly sovereign states in the wake of the decolonization period were expected to master and exercise such monopoly almost immediately after the transfer of power from the erstwhile colonial powers to the local ruling elites. This proved especially challenging as the colonial powers had destroyed their original, pre-colonial political structures and practices of statecraft. Not surprisingly, this never materialized in many states. A complete monopoly over coercive instruments of power has thus remained more of an assumption than an objective reality for the majority of the states comprising the international system, which is evident from a comparative analysis of intra-state wars and inter-state wars between 1940 and 2007, as suggested in Table 8.3 (see also Chapter 7).⁶

This also brings into sharp relief the assumption that a state commands the unquestioned allegiance of its citizens and is the provider of security to all its citizens. Scholars have shown how states have proven to be a source of insecurity and even oppression to their own populace, especially minorities, on the grounds of religion, race, language, gender, ethnicity, culture and so on and that this holds true of not only the global South but also the global North.⁷ In order to meet empiricist claims on their own turf, it is worth citing R.J. Rummel’s data that more than 262 million people have been killed by their own governments, which dwarfs the figure of 38.5 million people killed in international and civil wars in the 20th century alone.⁸ This “democide,” he noted, murdered six times more people than died in combat in all the foreign and internal wars of the century. Finally, it is not only the states located in the global South that still face secessionist demands but the political record of Eastern and Central Europe in the last two decades, and separatist demands made by Ireland and Scotland in the U.K., Quebec in Canada and Catalonia in Spain show that even the “oldest” players in the system are not immune to internal threats of disintegration.

148 *Navnita Chadha Behera**Table 8.4* Interventions by major powers, non-major powers and international organizations, 1946–2005

	<i>Cold War (N=690)</i>			<i>Post-Cold War (N= 425)</i>		
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Per year</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Per year</i>
Major powers	193	27.9	4.3	90	21.2	5.63
U.S.A.	74	10.7	1.68	35	8.2	2.18
United Kingdom	38	5.5	0.86	13	3.1	0.81
France	35	5.1	0.79	31	7.3	1.93
Soviet Union/Russia	25	3.6	0.56	10	2.4	0.63
China	21	3	0.47	1	0.2	0.06
Non-major powers	440	63.8	10	248	58.3	15.5
International organizations	57	8.3	1.2	87	20.5	5.4

Source: Pickering and Kisangani (2009: 597)

The *third* core constituent element pertains to the principle of sovereign equality and non-interference in one another's internal affairs. Empirically, the historical record shows the violation of this principle in the post-1945 period to be the norm rather than the exception, prompting Stephen Krasner to characterize sovereignty as “organized hypocrisy” (1999: 42). This underlines the contradictory practices of asserting the inviolability of territorial boundaries on the one hand and the practices of constant interference in the affairs of other states, ostensibly on humanitarian grounds, on the other. In other words, the Westphalian ideal of sovereignty as non-interference has always been just that – an ideal. It certainly does not match the empirical realities on the ground: 690 interventions occurred in the Cold War era between 1946 to 1989, as against 425 from 1990 to 2005. Overall, intervention rates, as shown in Table 8.4, seem to have increased.

In the post-Cold War era, roughly 16 foreign military interventions were launched per year during the 44 years of the Cold War, while 26 interventions per year were initiated during the 16 years of the post-Cold War period (Pickering and Kisangani 2009: 596–597). In fact, the debate on humanitarian intervention and the doctrine of “responsibility to protect” has since then sought to bestow the sanctity of international law for devising exceptions to the principle of sovereignty and identify grounds on which states can indeed militarily intervene in other states' internal affairs on humanitarian grounds (Mamdani 2010; Thakur 2012; Chapter 7).

Indeed, how the empiricist conceptualization of the sovereign state has survived and thrived in the face of such cumulative and empirically contradictory evidence that rebuts almost all its key postulates, is a question that remains to be answered.

Though the positivist and the post-positivist theoretical approaches differ in their foundational assumptions and methods of inquiry, as explained earlier, they actually remain tethered together at a much deeper level as they share the fundamental premise of Eurocentrism. While the former is ahistorical, the latter makes only half-hearted attempts at historicizing the state because they also fail to largely see beyond Europe.

The realist scholars sought to create a parsimonious and general theory of international relations, whose explanatory power was universal; but in order to derive the abstract

categories from empirical realities, these had to be located at some historical juncture. This was found in the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, which has since then been presented as “the European big bang theory of world politics” and modern state creation (Hobson 2013: 32). Eurocentrism thus remains deeply embedded in the DNA of the very idea of the modern state. This has proven to be a deeply flawed and questionable proposition on three counts.

First, it tends to assume that “the Europeans single-handedly created the sovereign state in the absence of any Eastern input,” and it was a phenomenon made in Europe and then exported to the rest of the world (Hobson 2013: 32). A critical gaze into the earlier history of Western and Eastern parts of the world ranging from India, China and West Asia to Africa and the Americas offers an altogether different picture. Hobson explains that the dialogue among these civilizations involved

diffusion of Eastern resource portfolios (ideas, institutions and technologies) in the wide ranging domain of war and military revolution to global trading patterns and their role in tracing epistemic origins of sovereignty through renaissance and the scientific revolution; that traversed across the Oriental global economy to be assimilated by the Europeans in the process of state formation especially its materialist aspects.

(Hobson 2013: 32)

Second, it failed to consider the pre-1648 history even of Europe, especially the imperial encounter between the Spanish and “indigenous Americans.” The year 1492 was an important milestone because “it not only preceded the rise of sovereignty but constituted an ideational crucible within which the concept of sovereignty was forged” (Hobson 2013: 46). Hobson explains how Western scholars of political theory and international law such as Francisco de Vitoria, Hugo Grotius, Albert Gentili and Emerich de Vattel along with Thomas Hobbes and John Locke generated

a Eurocentric “standard of civilization” discourse – a conceptual device whereby the Americas were constituted as an example of the original state of nature inhabited by savages and barbarians who lacked rational institutions which were then juxtaposed with Europe’s civilized institutions which meant that the European states were worthy of being awarded sovereignty.

(Hobson 2013: 44)

More importantly, it became axiomatic that the lack of sovereignty of the non-European world and the later emergence of European sovereignty enshrined imperialism as a natural and legitimate policy vis-à-vis uncivilized societies. Even the United States, which declared its independence from Great Britain in 1776, had over the next century, until 1887, seized over 1.5 billion acres of land from America’s indigenous people by treaties and executive orders (Saunt 2014).

Third, the problem with such Eurocentric historicism, to quote Dipesh Chakrabarty, is that it “assumes the existence of a singular, universalizing narrative of modernity and cannot countenance the existence of alternative modes of temporality each with its own concept of the political” (2000: 22–23). Such a denial renders post-colonial

peoples as “people without history” (Wolf 1982) and helps legitimize the “civilizing mission” of colonialism by translating historical time into cultural distance, that is, time taken by non-Western societies to become civilized and modernized like Western societies.

The history of state formation processes outside Europe is thus not studied and a particular slice of European history is considered to suffice as the singular basis for fashioning a general theory for *all*. This has resulted in a crucial disjuncture between the singular, epistemological formulation and conceptual parameters of the sovereign state with the ontologically diverse empirical grounded realities of most states. The fundamental idea of political community and authority are reduced to the modern sovereign state, whereas there are multiple political practices going on around the world and in different times of history that offer alternative imaginaries of political community and statecraft (Walker and Mendlovitz 1990). More importantly, the non-West, as a site of knowledge creation of international politics, was thus structurally and intrinsically removed from the very genesis of its foundational parameters as their diverse “pasts” stood delegitimized, as indeed any alternative conceptions of state and sovereignty envisaged in other temporal or spatial contexts.

Significantly, this is true not only of the realist tradition but also the Marxist approach, which had coined the powerful conceptual tool of “historical materialism” to escape telling a state-centric story of international politics. Marx and Engels’s attitude towards non-Western societies was also rather condescending, if not altogether contemptuous. They were convinced that Western imperialism and the spread of capitalism were necessary to liberate the “history-less people” from religious myths and the tyranny of tradition (Linklater and Burchill 2005: 133). The theoretical base of IR, thus, remained confined to Europe (and later, North America). Almost all other theoretical approaches including feminism, critical theory and post-modernism also remained somewhat complicit. So, whether Teschke traces sovereignty to the birth of capitalism in 17th-century England rather than to Westphalia, or the feminists locate the adoption of patriarchal practices in ancient Greek city-states, all throughout there is an implicit or explicit assumption of *a particular kind of state*. In other words, while the scholars have emphasized the need to study the history of state-making, an abstract notion of the sovereign state (*a la* the Westphalian model) remains deeply embedded in their consciousness and provides the ubiquitous reference point for all such scholarly debates. Histories of non-Western states continue to be mostly studied either in terms of the “*lack*” (the missing elements) or the “*distance*” (from their goalpost), that is, the time they needed to reach their “given destination,” a point discussed in detail in the following section. In methodological terms, their emphasis on ontology along with epistemology turns out to be a qualified one at best. Ontology, in this context, seems to have been used more from a utilitarian point of view; it is useful to understand and help in one’s search for an epistemological answer which remains “fixed” and “Eurocentric.” Ontology has to be unleashed to explore the full potential for knowledge building, as discussed below.

What can be done?

The key is to ask different questions and search for answers in different places. It is important to shift the focus from looking for a *universal* idea of sovereign state to

recognizing the possibility of different imaginaries of political authority, different degrees of stateness and multiple formulations shaped as they are by their diverse histories of state formation as indeed various political, social, economic, military and cultural forces continually exercising their influence from within and without. Accordingly, a state needs to be viewed as a *living* body – constantly in-the-making over the long term – whose internal and external structures, constituent social forces, political choices and cultural renderings are constantly evolving in a fundamental manner. This is potentially transformative and allows all states to create new norms, institutions and practices that are best suited to their own grounded realities.

This does not necessarily require abandoning the hitherto universal markers of having territory, sovereignty, centralized authority and so on but in providing “thick” descriptions of their diverse internal and external contexts and how these drive the state-making processes. So, a question of “what kind of a state?” merits a response *without* using Westphalia as a ubiquitous point of reference and calls for studying different organizing principles of power and authority within each state by asking: what social forces are exercising state power within and beyond (read external partners)? For whose benefit? And at whose cost?

Connecting with *histories* as distinct from *a history* (read European history) both in a spatial and temporal sense is imperative to understand how modernity and its variants of colonial modernity altered/fixed the trajectories of state-making with lasting consequences for the kind of states we have today. This might throw light on possible alternate structuring principles of political authority and the relationship with its constituent social groups and norms of public morality. Let me explain this with historical examples drawn from the Indian experiences of suzerainty, the Quranic concept of *hakkimaya* and cultural notion of sovereignty of the Americas’ indigenous peoples.

Drawing upon three key theoretical texts and epics of the Hindu tradition namely the *Manusmriti*, the *Arthashastra* written by Kautilya⁹ and the *Mahabharata*, Sudipto Kaviraj, for instance, points to a theory of the state that, “while recognising the requirement of unrestricted royal authority, sought to impose restrictions upon it by positing an order that was morally transcendent – an order to which it was both subject and in complex ways eventually responsible” (Kaviraj 2010: 44, 47). By distinguishing

between “the law” (*danda*) and a fallible human agent (the king), Manu is able to construct a theoretical structure in which the king does not enjoy unconditionally absolute power over the lives of his subjects because there is a moral framework of *dharma* to which he is, in turn, subordinate.

(Kaviraj 2010: 45)

In the medieval period, the Mughals followed “a theory of rule” drawn from a very different tradition of Persianate Islam that also “implicitly accepted limitations on political authority in relation to the *social* constitution, and which was parallel to those of Hindu rulers,” meaning that “the Islamic state also saw itself as limited and socially distant as the Hindu state” (Kaviraj 2010: 45). Kaviraj underlines the need to

understand the difference between actual weakness of a state and its marginality in principle. The relative autonomy of the social constitution from the state did not

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arise because the state was weak [but] ... because it followed from a moral principle, which guided the relation between rulers and subjects.

(2010: 45)

Unlike the European statecraft that deeply penetrated into people's lives by imposing the state religion and disarming, even eliminating all competitive players, as explained earlier, political authority and control in the traditional Indian order tended to be dispersed and distributed between various levels of authority: vassal states, regional kingdoms and empires, as distinct from a centralized political unity of the modern sovereign state. Another critical distinction was that vassals usually became so not by "contract" but "lawful conquest" or *dharamvijya*, which significantly did not involve the absorption of the conquered kingdom (Bhasham 1954: 95). Mostly, the suzerain's hand weighed very lightly, especially on the more powerful and remote vassal states, creating a fluid and malleable political system with constantly changing political status and loyalties of kingdoms. Also the state or its upper layers had little direct interaction or control over the collective identities at the grassroots level. The basic unit of most kingdoms comprised of the autonomous village communities, which were economically self-sufficient and self-governing, which centuries later, still thrive in the form of *panchayati raj* (village-level governing institutions) in the present-day Indian democracy. So, the following question merits further exploration: are India's democratic political practices of power sharing an entirely "modern" political product? Or, are these *derived* in some ways by its centuries-old practices of statecraft?

In the Middle Eastern context, the concept of *hakimiyyah*, derived from the Quranic word *hokum* (to govern and to rule), is defined by Qutb as "the highest governmental and legal authority" (cited in Khatab 2011: 98). While this might denote "sovereignty," it is often misconstrued to mean "God's rule" – a theocratic proposition, which Qutb totally rejected. Based on several Quranic verses (i.e., 2:229; 4:59), he argued, "government in Islam is limited to regulations laid down in the Qur'an and *sunnah* the primary sources of shari'ah law" (ibid.: 99), but that symbolize a deeply democratic commitment. Unlike an elected government which derives its legitimacy from the majority vote, this upholds the rule of law for the entire populace. Political theorists argue that limitations of governmental power in running the state and regulating the peoples' affairs lie at the heart of the idea of constitutional rule. This is indeed central to Qutb's idea of *hakimiyyah*, understood as being essential to the organs of the state, its identity and its domestic and international relations, while emphasizing the underlying unity of humanity in terms of race, nature and origins (Qutb 1992: 501). "If the sovereignty (*hakimiyyah*) of the law is accepted," Khatab points out, "the government should observe justice, freedom, power sharing, human rights, and consultation between the ruler and the ruled" (2011: 103–104).

Shifting the gaze to another part of the world throws up a deeply cultural premise of sovereignty by the indigenous peoples of North America, Canada and Australia. They believe that since tribes existed long before these states came into existence, their sovereignty is inherent and ancient. Their ability to *exercise* sovereignty is, however, severely circumscribed because "the recognition and respect necessary" for doing so has been consistently eroded by the states' continuing colonial practices, rendering it to be a "negotiable phenomenon" (Cobb 2005: 119). Lyons explains how the United States has limited and eroded the Native Americans' tribal sovereignty through a process of

“rhetorical imperialism” that entails defining and redefining the parties by describing them in different ways from “sovereign” to “ward,” from “nation” to “tribe” and from “treaty” to “agreement” (2000: 453; see too, Chapter 3). As the first story at the outset of this chapter illustrates, this has real, tangible consequences in the everyday experiences of Native Americans because their concepts of government and culture are inseparable. Wilkins explains that tribal sovereignty “can be said to consist more of continued cultural integrity than of political power and to the degree that a nation loses its sense of cultural identity, to that degree, it suffers a loss of sovereignty” (Wilkins 1997: 21). Sovereignty is in fact “cultural continuance,” but this is no longer a natural part of an inherent sovereign, but instead becomes “a criterion, a quality, that Native nations must [continually] prove for their sovereign status to be recognized,” and if they fail to do so, the Congress can simply terminate its government-to-government relationships with tribes and deny their sovereignty, as happened during the termination era of the 1950s (Cobb 2005: 121) and much earlier, as in the case of the appropriation of the Blue Lake.

In terms of inter-state relations, the Chinese philosophy of Confucianism stipulated a different principle of organizing power and authority. It held that there was a preordained natural order in which heaven is the source of all authority (Wang 2009: 111–112). “All-under-heaven,” according to Chinese philosopher, Zhao Tingyang had a “triple meaning – as the land of the world; as all peoples in the world; and as a world of institution – combined in the single term, indicating a theoretical project of the necessary and inseparable connections among these three elements” (2005). Unlike the horizontal Westphalian system organized on the basis of sovereign equality, the concept of “all-under-heaven” is organized in a hierarchy – a pattern of order based on a world measure. That is to say, the issues and affairs of the world should be analyzed and measured by a world standard rather than by a nation standard, and in the world context rather than from a local perspective. The Pax Sinica or Chinese world order was based on longevity and the flexibility of its core institution – the tributary system. During the Han period, it was primarily a special trading arrangement, but later it played an important political role in keeping peace and winning allies. The tributary system envisaged an institutional complex to ensure coexistence among different entities of the Chinese empire: barbarians, tribes, kingdoms, peripheral political communities and eventually the Europeans too (Zhang 2001: 53).

An important word of caution is that any such historical exemplars must not be viewed as offering an alternate *panacea*. The Indian political system, for instance, upheld its *varna* (caste) system’s discriminatory practices while the predominantly Muslim Ottoman Empire persecuted Jews and Christians as “inferior subjects.” So, while one must understand the Westphalian state system in its specific European context, it is equally important to problematize the past histories of other civilizations and states. At the same time, it is imperative not to read, filter and judge such historical conceptual constructs by modern sensibilities and yardsticks – linguistic, material or normative. Divorcing them from their specific historical contexts tends to result in misconstruing, if not distorting, their meanings. For instance, non-territorial and/or cultural notions of nationalism and other modes of belonging must be understood on their own terms.

Any disjuncture between these concepts and modern-day realities should also not *automatically* result in their dismissal. The purpose of introducing students to indigenous concepts in any part of the world is not to accept these uncritically but help them learn

to deploy these to ask more questions and explore when and why they emerged. How did they shape their respective state-making experiences? The idea is to expose them to multiple configurations and practices of statecraft, which are not necessarily boxed in the *a-priori* container of sovereign statehood.

Finally, it is important to drive home the point that there is a choice to be exercised in selecting any particular “lens” or a particular set of variables for studying a problem which, in turn has academic, normative and political consequences. A classroom exercise can explain how multiple understandings of the same phenomenon are derived. Let me explain this with reference to different “readings” of the sovereign state in the African context, which is predominantly cited for instances of dysfunctional, weak or failed states (see Chapter 7).

The sovereign state in Africa

Robert Jackson explains African sovereignty as part of a framework that juxtaposes “real states and positive sovereignty” in the global North with “quasi-state and negative sovereignty” in the global South (1986, 1993). Having an “unquestioned presence,” real states, it is argued, possess sovereignty by merit and have an integrated political community resting on a common culture with an effective government organization (Jackson 1993, cited in Doty 1996: 151–152). The quasi-states in Africa, by contrast, are characterized by a *lack* – an “absence” of political community, “lack” of national capability, backwardness and a “soft” state, characterized by corruption and disorder, and devoid of moral values.

It is important to understand the assumptions underlying Jackson’s analysis and the questions he asks or more importantly, *does not*. First, the very idea of “real statehood” is predicated on a primordial “universal,” formulation, which also serves as the gold standard for every state to match. Two, the local and diverse pre-colonial pasts of African states simply do not count. Three, Africa’s colonial pasts are understood purely from the standpoint of the West’s “civilizing mission” in being characterized as “the moral, legal, material aid structure that maintained Africa,” and generally as “a basically bloodless episode in the unfolding and development of the state system” (Doty 1996: 154). Four, it precludes any structural linkages between internal and external dynamics of state-making.

So, the African states’ failure is squarely attributed to their own “lack” of indigenous capacity for self-government, their incompetence and corruption, while the “benevolent” international society is mildly chastised for unintentionally facilitating them as a result of reinforcing the principle of primordial statehood. African states alongside other third world countries are constructed as “freeloaders in the international system,” who pursue collective ideologies, thereby creating “a normative dilemma” by getting sovereign independence and yet demanding development support from others (Doty 1996: 156).

However, using a different set of variables yields a very different picture of the African state. Amy Niang (2018), for instance, delves deep into the pre-colonial pasts of West Africa in order to understand the social structures that had sustained African political life. The Mossi state that had become the role model in the Voltaic region in Africa during its formative years through the 15th and 16th centuries, she explains, was constructed around the twin ideas of the *Naam* and the *Tenga*. The *Naam* – an original conception of political authority – established the political order and shaped the contours of social experience as

a whole, though it had to contend with the capacity for resistance of pre-existing social structures, especially the earth priests and other first-settler figures that operated under the moral authority of *Tenga* (Niang 2018: 26–27). Together, these constituted

analogized articulations of imaginaries of authority (an ethics of legitimation), of cultural ethos (beliefs, values, artistic expression) and positionalities (social statuses and relations, entitlements) which in reality were brought together by a juridical compact whose terms were to be regularly revisited through ritualised procedures.

(Niang 2018: 26–27)

The underlying legal ideas and norms like rituals, she adds, were “deeply ontological,” and were woven into mutually binding relationships, the legibility of which was both internal and experiential. While the pre-colonial forms of political, social and cultural order overlapped, the peculiar modalities of colonial modernity sought to carve these up into distinct spheres disrupting, instrumentalizing and discrediting their indigenous mediating mechanisms (Niang 2018: 196). Many local chiefs were co-opted into the colonial apparatus; no longer answerable to the people they governed, which effectively disempowered them. Elsewhere, they were attacked by the nationalist leadership like Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana and Thomas Sankara in Burkina Faso, who were committed to forging a modern, post-colonial state. Their state-making enterprise made it imperative for the Africans to overcome their primordial attachments and spiritual beliefs but in doing so, they created a post-colonial state that was “culturally void,” denuded of its public morality (Niang 2018: 197). Since the omission of Africa’s experiential pasts and moral orders had little bearing on the state formation processes, the post-colonial state not only cemented the original divide between the state and society fostered by the imperial rulers but also invested the state power solely in the hands of the sovereign. With the state becoming a solely political instrument, it became susceptible to its continued exploitative use for the benefit of its erstwhile colonial masters, at the expense of the majority of Africans. Niang explains that when this led to

contestations of various forms including an outright rejection of the state as a parasitic thing that had been displaced and subordinated to external exigencies and interests ... people escaped from the state in resistance, informality, avoidance, *faire-semblant*, subversion and other means that could free them from the state tutelage.

(Niang 2018: 195)

Instead of reworking the state structures to make them more accountable to people, this, paradoxically, has been construed as a sign of state weakness, if not failure.

Alternatively, Amin (1973), Rodney (1982), Mamdani (1996), Ferguson (2006) and Grovogui (2012) analyze the impact of colonial rule and often continuing neo-colonial interference in African states on its state-making processes. Doty (1996) argues that works like that of Jackson preclude the possibility that the colonial powers and/or the international system could be partially responsible for producing this condition of states whose stateness is truncated.¹⁰ Grovogui explains that right from the period of imperial regimes, which led to the genesis and institutionalization of the slave trade, the African protectorates and colonies were sites that allowed

“European usurpation of economic sovereign power, forced labor and taxation without representation,” and decolonization did not end the interference of imperial powers like France, the U.S. and the U.K. (Grovgoui 2012: 132). With Africa getting embroiled in the Cold War, such neo-colonial interference often resulted in the overthrow of democratically elected but “disagreeable” African leaders. Nkrumah (who was overthrown in 1966) was a victim of both interference and removal. He was preceded by Congo’s Patrice Lumumba (1961) and Togo’s Sylvanus Olympia (1963). All three were replaced by military dictators. These coups were executed “by multinational alliances that included locals and yet their mechanisms of implementation and structures of legitimation were all commodities of global politics long before African independence” (Grovgoui 2012: 121–122). Grovgoui (132) further explains that alongside the absence of African historiography in the political sciences, its disciplinary practices marked by the particular choice of liberalism and capitalism as the ideological lens which entered the field of African studies through theories of development, modernity and good governance, have distorted the terms of inquiry. In selecting these as the key to post-colonial salvation, Africanists selectively pointed to the failures of policies of Africanization and economic nationalization pursued by Afro-Marxist regimes in the late 1970s. These states, it was argued “lacked the rule of law, preyed in citizenries, expropriated land without compensation, instituted single party regimes, and thus deprived citizens of civil liberties” (132). Thus, Ghana (under Nkrumah), Guinea (under Sekou Toure) and Tanzania (under Julius Nyerere) among others emerged as symbols of an earlier era of failure, whereas Senegal, Liberia, Cote d’Ivoire, Kenya, Tunisia and similar examples of economic liberalism were branded as successful models of development (Young 1983, 1988). Up until the mid-1990s, these countries were reliable Western allies as long as each provided much needed natural and strategic resources to them while granting a free hand to the market economy at home. This, however, also meant that the “constitutional order in these countries all but negated local conventions,” and resulted in “the dispossession of the majority of Africans of land, power and rights” (Grovgoui 2012: 132).

The preceding discussion makes it clear that our understanding of state and sovereignty, indeed like any other social phenomenon, depends on what kind of questions we ask, the variables we select for studying it and which terrains are explored for seeking the answers. It makes it imperative therefore to understand and accord due recognition to the specificities of the political character of each state rather than work on false assumptions to make each conform to a given set of parameters.

Conclusion

The sovereign state will remain a significant pillar of the international system in the foreseeable future and hence it is important to seek to transform its conception from its hitherto exclusivist and ahistorical underpinnings towards understanding it as a nuanced, inclusive and historical phenomenon. This requires abandoning its explicit and implicit commitment to Eurocentrism as much as the drive to coin a singular and overarching epistemological formulation because the existing conceptualizations of the sovereign state have proven to be woefully inadequate for not only capturing the diverse and complex ground realities of large parts of the global South but some parts of the global North as well. There is a need to delve deeper into the histories

of those parts of the world which have thus far remained on the margins of the theory building enterprise in IR, and closely examine the structural linkages between the internal and external domains that determine the political character of a state, and which continue to evolve.

Questions for discussion

1. What are the differences and similarities between the positivist and the post-positivist notions of a sovereign state?
2. Do we need to historicize the phenomenon of the sovereign state? If so, why?
3. What do you understand by the state being a “living entity” and how does this transpire?
4. How does the choice of any particular set of variables impact our understanding of the state? Explain with relevant examples.
5. What do you understand by the political character of the state?
6. Explain the structural linkages between the internal and external domains of the state-making process.

Notes

- 1 <https://sacredland.org/taos-blue-lake-united-states/>
- 2 <https://fromshepherdsandshoemakers.com/2017/01/15/those-infamous-border-changes-a-crash-course-in-polish-history/>
- 3 For the map of the world in 1648 AD, see www.timemaps.com/history/world-1648ad/; for the world map in 1945 as per the United Nations, see www.un.org/en/decolonization/pdf/world1945.pdf; and for the current world map, see www.un.org/en/decolonization/pdf/worldtoday.pdf
- 4 See the video that shows how the European map has changed since 400 BC: www.visualcapitalist.com/2400-years-of-european-history/
- 5 Also see the map of countries joining the UN by their date of admission: www.targetmap.com/viewer.aspx?reportId=2937
- 6 Data provided by Berman et al. (2018) that charts the incidents and effects of conflicts worldwide between 1975 and 2015 further corroborates such trends. It juxtaposes the figures plotting battle deaths in thousands for intra-state and inter-state conflicts in each year with the number of conflicts with at least 25 battle-related deaths occurring in the given year. This period too has seen far more civil wars than wars between nations.
- 7 The U.S. locks up more people per capita than any other nation, with deep-rooted racial and gender disparities. See Wendy Sawyer and Peter Wagner, “Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2019,” March 19, 2019. www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2019.html
- 8 See Prof. R.J. Rummel’s website: www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/20TH.HTM
- 9 He was the shrewd counselor to the first Mauryan emperor, Chandragupta, who defeated Alexander’s successor, Seleucus, and established a Hindu empire.
- 10 In Latin America, *dependentistas* spoke of a structural trap that had been historically set up by the most powerful capitalist states to deny the possibility of these states effectively practicing their sovereignty and overcoming dependent development (Lopez-Alves, 2000, 2012). See Chapter 13.

Further reading

Chakrabarty, Dipesh (2000) *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chakrabarty explains why Europe is not the only source of all legitimate knowledge and makes room for other ways of knowing in the world.

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- Krasner, Stephen (1999) *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. Krasner offers historical accounts of actual practices of sovereign statehood to show how the Westphalian sovereignty is a durable myth because it persists despite frequent violations of its basic principles.
- Niang, Amy (2018) *The Post-Colonial State in Transition: Stateness and Modes of Sovereignty*, New York: Rowman and Littlefield. Niang traces the pre-colonial pasts of African political life to highlight the diversity of human trajectories on conceptions of statecraft, legitimacy, public morality and different imaginaries of stateness and sovereignty.
- Walker, R.B.J. and Saul Mendlovitz (1990) *Contending Sovereignties: Redefining Political Community*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner. Walker and Mendlovitz situate state sovereignty in a broader historical and conceptual framework to explore the middle ground between the mutually exclusive positions of the permanent and primordial presence or the immanent absence of state sovereignty.
- Walter, Rodney (1982a) *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Washington DC: Howard University Press. Walter offers a historical account of primitive exploitation and oppression of Africa to benefit Europe and how the latter's development and Africa's underdevelopment are dialectically linked and a product of the same historical processes.

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